

Intesa Sanpaolo to acquire First Bank doubling group's presence in Romania



Intesa Sanpaolo strengthens its presence in the CEE region through the acquisition of Romania's First Bank from US-based private investment fund J.C. Flowers & Co.

Intesa Sanpaolo and JCF Tiger Holdings S.A.R.L., the controlling shareholder of First Bank S.A. (Romania), have signed a share purchase agreement for the acquisition of 99.98% of the shares in First Bank S.A. The transaction is expected to close by the first quarter of 2024, pending approval by the competent regulatory authorities.

First Bank is a commercial bank with 40 branches in Romania – where GDP growth is expected to surpass 3% over the next two years – and is focused on serving SMEs and retail customers, with total assets of around €1.5 billion. In recent years, First Bank has prioritized investments in digital technology, developing one of the market's best-regarded mobile banking apps.

Intesa Sanpaolo Bank Romania – part of Intesa Sanpaolo's International Subsidiary Banks Division – serves around 60,000 customers through 34 branches and has assets of around €1.5 billion. Intesa Sanpaolo has been present in Romania since 1996.

Marco Elio Rottigni, *Chief of Intesa Sanpaolo's International Subsidiary Banks Division*, commented: "We're pleased to welcome First Bank's employees and customers into the Intesa Sanpaolo Group. This operation doubles our presence in Romania, a high-growth country with strong ties to Italy, and fits well with our strategy to capture value-driven opportunities while maintaining our focus on organic growth, aimed at driving profitability. Expanding in Romania strengthens our well-established position in Central and Eastern Europe and actively supports the internationalization of Italian companies. We look forward to working with our new colleagues very soon."

Intesa Sanpaolo's International Subsidiary Banks Division (ISBD) is a key player in the financial landscape of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region. The Division operates across three continents, with 11 commercial banks in CEE and Egypt, along with a wealth management company in China. This expansive network caters to over 7 million clients, through nearly 900 branches and a dedicated workforce of some 21,000 employees.

In the first half of 2023, ISBD contributed significantly to Intesa Sanpaolo's profitability, accounting for 17% of the Group's profits, with the Division's net income for the first half more than tripling to €679 million.